

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS BRIEFING

## PRESENTATION SKILLS

**This PDF supports the short video about presentation skills and it's one of nine paired videos and PDFs on Tunnelworks, each covering a common employability skill.**

The main aim with these resources is to help you understand what these skills are, and how they are used. You might be surprised to realise that you're probably using many of these skills in your school, social and family lives already.

So, even if you don't have lots of working experience, you do have relevant work skills to talk about when applying for jobs. Use these resources to help identify your skills and practise writing and talking about them. Then you'll be interview ready!

### What is a good general definition of presentation skills?

There are two sides to presentation skills. There are the skills you need in delivering effective and engaging presentations to a variety of audiences: these cover the structure of your presentation, the tone of your voice and the body language you use and your ability to get the message over. Presentation skills also include: your general appearance, attitude and approach to your job and personal life, in other words how you present yourself to the world.

### What does that mean in practice on the Thames Tideway Tunnel project?

The Thames Tideway Tunnel project is a large and complicated construction project where lots of things will be happening at the same time and plans can often change. This means that it's really important that employees are kept up to date about what's happening. One good way of doing this is to present to them, either in small groups or sometimes large departments. Presenting in person can often be a really good way of engaging others and helping them understand new information. It's also an ideal opportunity for two-way communication enabling employees to ask questions or give feedback.

Personal presentation is also very important and everyone is expected to be positive, friendly and approachable, and dressed appropriately for their job whether in the office or on a construction site.

### What are two typical examples of presentation skills in action on the Thames Tideway Tunnel project?

One example might be when the project engineer needs to communicate new plans for a stretch of the Tunnel to the Tunnel workers. The project engineer will arrange for all relevant members of the team to be gathered so that new plans can be presented in an effective way. By presenting to the workers directly, it also means that the project engineer has a direct line of communication with them. This is great for enabling two-way discussions and gives the workers a good way of feeding back any comments, thoughts or concerns they might have.

Another example would be when the PR or Communications team present to the local community to update them on the project's progress. Presenting to the local community in person allows the team to meet with people face-to-face. It gives the project a 'human touch' and can be a really good way of getting immediate feedback and responding to questions from the local community.

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#### **What are the individual elements in presentation skills?**

The individual elements of presentation skills include: preparing and researching your presentation; creating the presentation and deciding the format you'll use e.g. just speaking or speaking with slides and paper handouts etc; practicing your presentation; giving consideration to the audience and the types of questions or feedback they might give; timing your presentation so you know how long it takes; thinking about what you might wear, how you should look and knowing where you'll be giving your presentation.

It is also useful to think about how other people might see you. Try to dress and look right for the situation you are in and aim to be a positive and friendly person, and you won't go far wrong.

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#### **At school or at home what sort of activities might help me to develop presentation skills?**

If you've worked successfully with a group of classmates or friends or family then you will have developed and used presentation skills. Typical presentation skills include: giving a presentation to your classmates for a school project; giving a team-building short talk to your sports team (encouraging them so everyone works together); giving a talk at your school assembly on a cause close to your heart e.g. for a fundraising event or charitable trip overseas.

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#### **If I'm applying for a job and the employer says they want individuals with good presentation skills, how can I talk about things I've done and make them relevant?**

Think about and write down examples of where you have given a presentation. Also think about how you stuck to any personal presentation rules at school or other places e.g. wearing a uniform for a job. Practice and be ready to talk about them in an interview.

You could give an example of when you had to present to classmates (maybe during a tutorial or a PSHE lesson) to raise awareness of an important issue or cause. You could explain that you had to fully research the cause and think carefully how best to present to your classmates. You could talk about how you condensed your research into bullet pointed facts that you then used as prompts to talk around. Explain how you practised in front of your family so that you could time your presentation and used their feedback to make improvements to your presentation. You could then explain how you practised again before delivering your presentation to the class and were able to answer any questions with confidence as you fully knew your subject matter inside out.

Another example could be working in a shop at the weekend. Explain that you understood that it was really important to take pride in your appearance, to be at work on time, looking your best and being keen to come across as friendly and positive to customers and colleagues.